

MAYOR'S MESSAGE – November 2017

I sometimes hear people use the term “sense of community” and I have thought about what that term means. I imagine the term has a different meaning to different people. What do you think of when you hear “sense of community?”

To some, it's a sense of belonging or feeling included, or maybe it's feeling an emotional connection with others. Perhaps it's a sense of mattering or making a difference.

When I think of “sense of community,” as it relates to the city of Murray, I think of neighborhoods of residents who know their neighbors, are proud of their communities, are inclusive and want to contribute to the well-being of all.

Often the city receives complaints of unkempt yards, weeds, rubbish or other nuisances. Not always, but often there is a legitimate underlying reason that a resident has failed to maintain their premises, such as illness, temporary or long-term disability, or maybe a lack of resources.

While city code enforcement personnel are ready and willing to investigate and enforce these types of issues, I can't help but wonder what would happen if the first call were to another neighbor, a neighbor's family or friend to find out the reasons for the lack of care or maintenance. Then help find a solution. Many times, a person or family just needs a temporary helping hand.

Harry S. Truman said, “All will concede that in order to have good neighbors, we must also be good neighbors. That applies in every field of human endeavor.”

I was recently invited to address a local religious congregation. The pastor asked me to speak on how his members could become more involved in the city. The first thing I mentioned to the congregation was: if you want to be involved in the improvement of the city, start with your own neighborhood. Get to know your neighbors and find out how you can help them. Something as simple as picking up litter on the roads or sidewalks can lead to a “sense of community.” Watching out for each other, whether or not it's through an organized Neighborhood Watch doesn't matter as long as neighbors are watching out for neighbors and reporting suspicious activities.

There are many opportunities in Murray to contribute to the “sense of community,” from volunteering at the Heritage Center, Boys and Girls Club, or library, to assisting with maintenance or cleaning of the city parks. Murray utilizes the *justserve.org* website to post service opportunities. This resource can be helpful for scout troops, school organizations, civic groups and the general public to know what they can do to help.

Murray City is a diverse community with a great mix of neighborhoods. Regardless of which neighborhood you call home, we are all part of the Murray community. Whatever the term “sense of community” means to you, I encourage all to strive for it by first looking out for the well-being of our neighbors.

Sincerely,



Blair Camp